**A Farewell to Arms
About the Author**

**Ernest Hemingway, 1899-1961**

Ernest Hemingway may have been the most famous novelist in the English language during his lifetime. Idolized by readers, envied by fellow writers, and adored by many for the romantic lifestyle that he created for himself, Hemingway the writer must always be distinguished from Hemingway the public figure. The first was a sensitive and exacting artist; the second was a larger-than-life image maintained for tabloid consumption. As early as 1929, Dorothy Parker was moved to remark: "Probably of no other living man has so much tripe been penned or spoken."

The adulation that Hemingway inspired is not difficult to explain. By turns tough and tender, he lived a life of exuberant masculinity-which included hunting for big game in Africa, for Nazi submarines in his fishing boat off Key West, or for the best bar in Paris. He celebrated bullfighting, boxing, hunting, and even warfare as manly pursuits worthy of respect. His years were rife with adventurous accident, including an anthrax infection while on honeymoon in France, and two successive plane crashes on safari. Second-degree burns resulting from a bushfire accident prevented him from traveling to Sweden to accept the Nobel Prize. He won the Silver Medal of Military Honor in the First World War and the Bronze Star Medal in the Second. A leader of the so-called "Lost Generation" and a Modernist, Hemingway's closest friendships included literary giants Ezra Pound, Gertrude Stein, and James Joyce. He was an intellectual and a celebrity, and one of the few Americans to find both roles congenial. He married four times and lived to see eighteen of his works published. He died a millionaire, a close friend of movie stars such as Gary Cooper, and a winner of both the Pulitzer and Nobel prizes. In many ways, his career was the stuff of legends.

Such success did not, however, alleviate his personal struggles. For a man so publicly celebrated and revered, he could be curiously reticent-he wanted no biography written about his life, and he left a will that blocked any publication of his letters. His later years were marked by severe depression, for which he underwent electro-convulsive therapy. Suffering from acute paranoia, he believed for a time that federal agents were after him. Years of alcoholism and organ damage wreaked havoc on his body; digestive complications, high blood pressure, and failing eyesight troubled him constantly. Ernest Hemingway eventually committed suicide in 1961, following the path of his father and two siblings.

**Hemingway and the Lost Generation**

Though he had served as an ambulance driver during the First World War, Ernest Hemingway's decisive years in Europe started in 1921, when he arrived in France with a letter of introduction from the writer Sherwood Anderson. In those postwar years, Paris had become the home of many expatriate writers, including Ezra Pound, James Joyce, E. E. Cummings, Ford Madox Ford, and Gertrude Stein. Hart Crane and F. Scott Fitzgerald were frequent visitors. It was this circle of mostly American writers that Hemingway joined when he arrived; and while "the Lost Generation" was Gertrude Stein's phrase, it was Hemingway who immortalized it in the epigraph for his 1926 novel,*The Sun Also Rises*. The book was so popular that, by 1934, Malcolm Cowley could note, "It was a good novel and became a craze-young men tried to get as imperturbably drunk as the hero, young women of good families took a succession of lovers in the same heartbroken fashion as the heroine, they all talked like Hemingway characters and the name was fixed."

Recently married and employed as a foreign correspondent for the*Toronto Star* newspaper, Hemingway spent his days interviewing leaders such as Mussolini and writing fiction. He soon became Ford's assistant editor at *The Transatlantic Review*, an important literary magazine. In 1923, the American author and publisher Robert McAlmon printed Hemingway's first book, *Three Stories and Ten Poems*, in Paris. Hemingway would later complain that all he earned from this book "was the enmity of McAlmon, because it sold out while his own volumes remained in stock."

Another American, Sylvia Beach, opened a bookshop called Shakespeare & Company in 1919, and it soon became a center of literary life in Paris. The store even loaned its poorer patrons rare books, such as D. H. Lawrence's banned *Lady Chatterley's Lover* It was shut down in 1941 supposedly because Beach would not allow a German officer to buy the last copy of James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*; Beach had been the first to print Joyce's *Ulysses*in 1922.

Why were so many American writers living abroad? Paris was a cheap place after the war, with none of the strictures to be found back home, such as Prohibition. Daring innovators in all the arts lived there-like Picasso, Stravinsky, and Modigliani-and many were neighbors in the cheap districts of Montparnasse . The artistic and intellectual ferment of those years moved Hemingway to write: "If you are lucky enough to have lived in Paris as a young man, then wherever you go for the rest of your life, it stays with you, for Paris is a moveable feast."

"Every man becomes civilized between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five. If he does not go through a civilizing experience at that time of his life, he will not become a civilized man. The men who went to war at eighteen missed the civilizing ... All you young people who served in the war are a lost generation. You have no respect for anything."
-Gertrude Stein

**If you're interested in the Lost Generation of writers, you might also enjoy reading:***Tender Is the Night*by F. Scott Fitzgerald (1934)
*Exile's Return*by Malcolm Cowley (1934)
*Being Geniuses Together*by Robert McAlmon (1938)
*A Moveable Feast*by Ernest Hemingway (1964)